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SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR KANERVA-RICE MEETING FEBRUARY 2008

REF: A. HYATT-TURNER TELCON 31 JAN 08
¶B. HELSINKI 715

Classified By: POLCHIEF GREG THOME FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Foreign Minister Kanerva will seek to use his Feb. 11 meeting with S to highlight the GoF's priorities as 2008 Chairman in Office (CiO) of the OSCE. The Finns share our views on the key challenges currently facing the OSCE. However, they feel a deep historic tie to the organization and are loath to see the OSCE further weaken -- or worse -- on their watch. A show of support from the Secretary for the OSCE and for Finland's Chairmanship will pay dividends for the USG by emboldening Finland to counter Moscow's destructive efforts and to bolster ODHIR and other useful OSCE institutions. Outside OSCE issues, Kanerva will look to update the Secretary on the GoF's decisions to increase humanitarian aid to Afghanistan; to contribute to a &Nordic OMLT;8 and to agree with Sweden on a longterm mechanism to &rotate8 leadership of &Nordic8 PRT at Mazar-al-Sharrif. Bilaterally, it would be helpful if S could urge Finland to join the NATO Response Force (NRF). END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) Finnish Foreign Minister Ilkka Kanerva is scheduled to meet the Secretary on Feb. 11. While in Washington, we understand that the FM is also seeking meetings with SecDef Gates, NSA Hadley, House OSCE Committee Chairman Alcee Hastings (D-FL), the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the Brookings Institute.

Bolstering Finland's Confidence as OSCE CiO

¶3. (SBU) Kanerva's stated purpose in requesting the meeting with the Secretary is to brief her on Finland's agenda for its CY2008 OSCE chairmanship. We defer to Vienna's detailed reporting on the GoF's CiO. Suffice it to say that the GoF shares US views on all the major, difficult challenges facing the OSCE as an institution, including Kosovo, ODHIR, and the need to counter unhelpful Russian initiatives. Kanerva will highlight these areas of US-Finnish agreement, while downplaying the OSCE Secretariat's budget, which is one of the few topics on which we have a difference of opinion.

¶4. (C) More important for Kanerva will be an overall show of support from the Secretary for both the OSCE as an institution and for the Finnish CiO. The FM is in no way nave about the difficulties facing the OSCE or about the clear efforts Moscow is making to damage the organization --

and ODHIR in particular. Indeed, Finland is deeply concerned about Russia's unhelpful stance on the broad range of issues of importance to the US and to the majority of Western European OSCE members. Finland has a deep emotional and historic commitment to the OSCE. The Finns feel that the organization was born & on Finland's watch⁸ as a result of the Helsinki Accords of 1978. Now, 40 years later, the GoF is loath to see the organization fall apart & on its watch.⁸

In this regard, Kanerva was taken aback by certain statements suggesting that & the US needs an exit strategy from the OSCE⁸ (reported Ref A) and will eagerly welcome any show of support S is willing to offer for the OSCE. From the perspective of USG interests, the utility of such support is NOT/NOT simply to make the Finns feel better about their CiO. Rather, our support will help the GoF feel emboldened and confident of strong USG backing when it makes efforts to counter Russia's unhelpful tendencies or to show leadership in strengthening ODHIR and the other useful OSCE institutions.

Afghanistan Update

¶5. (SBU) The meeting also offers the Secretary the opportunity to thank Finland for its increased commitments in Afghanistan. After a period of exhaustive internal debate, Finland has -- as Kanerva promised when he met the Secretary in May -- brokered consensus within the GoF for the following:

-- An additional 3 billion Euros in humanitarian assistance (1 billion in budget year 2007 money and 2 billion for 2008).

-- A ten-officer OMLT contribution (probably in partnership with Norway), which will result in one additional &Nordic OMLT.⁸

-- A longer term commitment (probably in either CY 2009 or 2010) to take leadership of the Mazar-al-Sharif PRT -- a commitment that will include an additional 150 to 160 troops.

The emerging dialogue between Sweden and Finland will, we believe, ensure strong &Nordic Cooperation⁸ and an effective longterm Finnish commitment to the Mazar PRT.

The NATO Response Force

¶6. (C) Kanerva and MOD Jyri Hakamies continue to press for Finland to join the NRF, but they have not yet obtained government consensus or President Halonen's OK,. A word from S urging Finland to join Sweden at the Bucharest NATO Summit in announcing an intention to join would bolster Kanerva's bargaining position.

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